

Synaptic Connections

The Official Newsletter for Division VIII - Neuropsychology

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Spotlight on Linda Nelson, PhD.

By: Mary Goodarzi, MA

Dr. Linda Nelson is a board certified neuropsychologist as well as a qualified medical evaluator for the state of California. Dr. Nelson is also one of the authors of the upcoming book: Using the MMPI-2 in Forensic Assessments that is published by APA books and will be available to buy on January 15.

During her doctorate program, Dr. Nelson studied under the developers of the MMPI-2: Philip Marks, James Butcher, Kenneth Graham, and Alex Caldwell. She came from a background where she learned a lot about this assessment and how to use it in the best way possible.

The authors of this book, James N. Butcher, Giselle A. Hass, Roger L. Greene, and Linda D. Nelson, aim to assist clinicians on how and when to use this test for patients who come into their office. Dr. Nelson's chapters within the book are focused on how to use the MMPI-2 in neuropsychological assessments and as a tool in workers compensation evaluations, as these are her two fields of specialty.

Dr. Nelson was also the coordinator and one of the presenters for the workshop at the APA convention in DC: Contemporary use of the MMPI-2 in Forensic Assessments. This three-hour workshop was completely sold out at the convention and all attendants received CE credits. The presenters have applied to present the same workshop at CPA's Convention in San Diego. Many clinicians want to know how to use this test and what the authors and presenters are trying to bring out in the book and workshop is being able to understand how to use this assessment for different cultures as our society is becoming so culturally diverse. As Dr. Nelson states, only two translated versions of are



Linda Nelson, PhD.

accepted and credible: Chinese and Spanish. Other translated versions have not been properly scientifically tested.

Dr. Nelson's expertise and emphasis in the book is in the neuropsychological setting on how to use the MMPI-2 in the medical and legal settings. She states that when going into this setting, one must defend the test and explain why the test offers critical information; therefore, the book provides readers the basis of extending the use of the MMPI-2, especially the validity and the basic clinical scales. The newest competitor of the MMPI-2 is the MMPI-2-RF, and as Dr. Nelson reports, "this test has no empirical or scientific validity." The studies that have been published have only been studied by the authors of the test, which results in a big conflict of interest.

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CPA Division VIII
1231 I Street, Suite 204
Sacramento, CA 95814
www.cpapsych.org
916.286.7979

“To improve one life for the better, that’s all.

Anything beyond one life improved is extra credit.” *David Lechuga, PhD*

Spotlight Cont’d

Contemporary use of the MMPI-2 in Forensic Assessments.

She wants readers to be cautious of using this assessment because some of the validity scales (FBS) cannot be credibly used. Based on many studies, research indicated dramatic differences from examples and were not picking up on people who we know were malingering on the MMPI-2-RF versus the the MMPI-2 (for example, the Unibomber). The MMPI-2 picked up all of the elevated scales and personality types and the RF said that he was perfectly normal. Dr. Nelson would like us to remember to utilize this test as a staple in our batteries in order to get an credible index on our patient’s emotional and personality indexes.

The MMPI-2 offers us a mechanism in determining if they malingerers, if they have somatization or factitious disorders, or if they’re credible. More examples and strategies will be given at the workshop and within the book.

Dr. Nelson also discussed her goals for Division VIII and would like to get more people interested in the field of neuropsychology, specifically creating a more culturally diverse field. She is currently working with other committee members and CPAGS to create a mechanism to enter high school and community college classes in order to promote the awareness of our field of psychology and specifically neuropsychology. The committee is trying to establish a Student Scholarship Program for interested students to apply for an all expense paid trip to attend the CPA Conference in San Diego this year where they will attend the workshops, dinners, and get honored with an award. With other goals in mind, Dr. Nelson sees this field going into specialty areas and would recommend students in the

field to target a specific population and excel in that field. As she states, “select an area, get good in it, and just work it.” Good luck with this upcoming year and with the release of the book, Dr. Nelson.

About Mary Goodarzi, M.A.

Mary Goodarzi is a doctoral student at The Wright Institute in Berkeley and received her MA from Pepperdine University in West Los Angeles. She is currently a practicum trainee within an integrated primary care clinic, working collaboratively with physicians, clinicians, and other medical health professionals.



Eric Samuels, MA, MS, CPAGS Chair

Justice Taskforce that began last year. Efforts will also be made to improve our communication and outreach efforts so that we are more transparent and take advantage of social media platforms. The CPAGS Executive Council has agreed to transfer administration of the CPAGS website to CPA and to embed the CPAGS website within CPA’s website. We will also work to take more advantage of social media and to have more interactive discussions via the CPAGS listserv and the creation of a CPAGS blog. Finally, changes will be made in the way CPAGS works internally so that we are a more efficient and effective group in the future. This will include clarifying parts of the CPAGS Bylaws that do not make sense so that we can have clearer directions about how to move forward in the future and be a more-nimble organization. This initiative will also include efforts to finalize our Policies & Procedures Manual.

CPAGS Update

By: Eric Samuels, MA, MS

The California Psychological Association of Graduate Students (“CPAGS”) is the graduate student division of CPA. CPAGS has several goals for this year. The CPAGS Executive Council will be working to improve existing programs as well as provide more programs that are beneficial for psychology graduate students throughout the state. This will include student-oriented programming at CPA Convention and efforts to begin a mentorship program. The CPAGS Executive Council has already taken steps to create a CPAGS Membership Chair who will work to promote membership and the initiative to formally allow master’s students to join CPAGS was recently passed. CPAGS will also endeavor to provide more opportunities for students to understand the importance of, and obtain experience with, advocacy. Such efforts will include panels about advocacy on campuses and an expansion of the Social

About Eric Samuels, MA, MS

Eric A. Samuels is a fourth year doctoral student at The Wright Institute. His clinical practicum is at City College of San Francisco. Ecampuses.

“First and foremost, we intend to be of service to our Division members, and the clients and patients that they serve.”

In Memoria Robert Sbordone, PhD. 1940-2014



**By: Linda Nelson, PhD.,
and Arnold Purisch PhD.**

It is with great sorrow that Division VIII (Clinical Neuropsychology) would like to inform you of the death of one of our dear colleagues and fellow neuropsychologist, Robert Sbordone, PhD. Ironically, Bob died on Sunday August 3, 2014 of complications of a large right hemisphere glioblastoma that had only recently been discovered.

He was 74 years old and had enjoyed a long and productive life. He engaged in private practice with Dr. Arnie Purisch, Ph.D. (clinical neuropsychologist; Orange County), for over thirty years. Many of you knew Bob through his impressive contributions to the field of neuropsychology. He was one of the few neuropsychologists boarded by both ABN and ABCN and he was a Fellow of the National Association of Neuropsychology or NAN. A few years ago, he was nominated for the Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Academy of Neuropsychology. He was a pioneer in computerized testing, having developed and published a standardized memory assessment, the Sbordone-Hall Memory Battery, as early as the middle 1980s. He consulted with several cognitive rehabilitation facilities around the country in the 1980's, when this endeavor was still in its infancy. Bob was grown up in East Boston in an ethnic Italian neighborhood and often joked that he was lucky to escape without resorting to a life of crime that befell many of his friends and neighbors. He rose on the basis of his stellar

intelligence and physical prowess. In his late teens he won a body building contest and was named Mr. South Boston. He attended USC where he was a gifted javelin thrower and qualified as an alternate as a member of the 1960 Olympic team. He had multiple opportunities to compete internationally and shared many colorful tales of his adventures, including meeting the Shah of Iran and traveling to the Soviet Union during the height of the cold war. He was a gifted clinician in the best sense of the word. He often railed against the tendency for our field to reduce our patients to a set of test scores and statistics. In his publications, he advocated a vector analysis approach in which the individual needed to be viewed within a broad biopsychosocial context: Test performance was only one of many data points to be considered in the assessment of a patient's functioning.

Far from an "ivory tower" clinician, he emphasized functioning in the real world and co-edited the groundbreaking work *Ecological Validity of Neuropsychological Testing* (1996).

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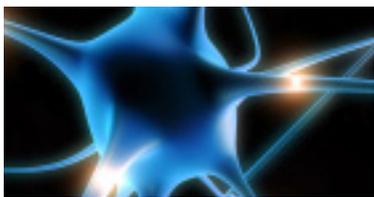
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Editor-in-Chief

Delia Silva PsyD.
dsilva@neuropacific.com

Associate Editor-in-Chief

Roxanna Rahban, PhD.
rahbanAssessments@gmail.com

Production Editor

Debra Chase
dchase@cpapsych.org

Contributing Authors (This Issue)

Mary Goodarzi, MA
Linda Nelson, PhD.
Arnold Purisch PhD.
Eric Samuels, MA, MS

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In Memoria Cont'd

Far from an "ivory tower" clinician, he emphasized functioning in the real world and co-edited the groundbreaking work Ecological Validity of Neuropsychological Testing (1996). This text was a classic work that is still one of the most cited references related to this topic. His book, Neuropsychology for Psychologists, Health Care Professionals and Attorneys, most recently in its third edition (2007), has proven to be an invaluable resource for litigators and probably one of the most practical and clearly written texts for neuropsychology graduate students that has been published.

Although a man of the mind, Bob also appreciated activities that afforded a high degree of stimulation. Through the years he had quite an impressive collection of sports cars, the faster the better. Taking a drive with Bob required buckling up and preparing for the survival of g forces.

Bob served in the U.S. Air Force as an Airman 1st Class and then enlisted in the California Military Reserve, ultimately rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Service Command.

An avid fan of science fiction, Bob, last year (at the age of 73!), published his first science fiction novel, Client from the Future. This is an action filled story that incorporated his love of technology, aliens, and military heroics.

A few days before his death, while lying in a hospital bed, he said he hoped to live long enough to realize his aspiration of seeing his brain child reach the big screen. Most of all, Bob had a generous and compassionate spirit. He was a gentle giant who loved children and lamented that he never had any of his own. My children knew him as Uncle Bob. He leaves behind only a small family, a brother, Richard, living on the east coast.

It was an honor to be part of his life and he will truly be missed.

